

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This continuation has been filed in part to further prosecute the claims rejected in the parent application. Of the original claims, claim 1-8, 12-18 and 20 remain in the case. In addition, new claims 21-32 have been added to claim the invention in different terminology and to claim different aspects of the invention. Of the original claims, only claim 7 has been amended, specifically to change its dependency from claim 1 to claim 6 to provide an antecedent basis for the phrase "said plurality of transistors" in claim 7.

In the single Office Action during the prosecution of the parent application, the Examiner objected to the drawings and to the specification, which objections were acceptably attended to the parent case, and corresponding amendments are also made herein.

In the Office Action in the parent case, claims 1-3, 5-8, 12-18 (and 20) were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Ginetti. The Examiner stated, among other things, that Ginetti discloses a second plurality of switching elements selectively providing tap positions to the wiper terminal. It is respectfully submitted, however, that this is not true. Instead, the tap position for VOUT in Ginetti is fixed at the middle of the plurality of impedance elements to which the second plurality of switching elements are coupled. Instead, the second plurality of switching elements provide tap positions for that string of impedance elements to the other two strings of impedance elements. Clearly, therefore, a rejection under 35 USC 102 is inappropriate.

Further, however, the difference between the present invention and Ginetti is not just an arbitrary connection difference, but rather is a substantial simplification, reducing the number of impedance elements required, the number of switching elements required, and the capacitances of the circuit. In particular, it will be noted that in an embodiment of the present invention in accordance with Figure 3 of the application, the number of center resistance elements (1R) coupled to the wiper is equal to the number of resistance elements (4R) above and below the center resistance elements. Similarly, the number of switches coupling the nodes of the center resistive elements to the wiper is also equal to the number of switches coupling the nodes of each of the upper and lower 4R resistor strings. This is to be compared with Figure 3 of Ginetti, wherein the number of resistive elements in the center resistor string is twice the number of resistive elements in the upper and lower resistor strings. Similarly, the number of switches used to couple nodes in the center resistor string to the upper and lower resistor strings is twice the number of switches for coupling the nodes in each of the upper and lower resistor strings to the end terminals.¹ Accordingly, the present invention provides a substantial reduction in the

¹ Figure 3 of Ginetti appears to have multiple errors in it, so one can question the specific numbers in, but not the concept of, the above discussion. For instance, Figure 3 of Ginetti shows a 9 resistor string with resistors labeled RPLO and RPL7 (8 total) at the ends. It also shows 9 switches labeled MPLO and MPL7 (8 total) for the end switches. It also shows an 8 resistor string labeled RPMO and RPL6 (7 total) at the ends. It also shows 9 switches labeled MPMO and MPM7 (8 total) at the ends. It also shows an 8 resistor string labeled RNMO and RNM6 (7 total) at the ends. It also shows 9 switches labeled MNMO and MNM7 (8 total) at the ends. It also shows an 8 resistor string with resistors labeled RNLO and RNL6 (7 total) at the ends. It also shows 9 switches labeled MNLO and MNL7 (8 total) for the end switches. It also shows an unsymmetrical configuration in that the upper resistor string has 9 resistors while the lower resistor string only has 8.

number of resistors and switches required. It is therefore respectfully submitted that not only is the present invention, as claimed in the original rejected claims, not anticipated by Ginetti, but clearly is not rendered obvious by Ginetti. This is clearly shown by the fact that the differences in the circuits and the advantageous end result of the claimed invention were not obvious to the Examiner, even when reviewing both at the same time. How could the present invention be obvious to one reviewing Ginetti alone?

The new claims claim the invention in alternate terminology, and in addition, claim other features of the invention. In particular, it will be noted that in the new claims the resistor strings are specifically coupled in series, which clearly is not the case in Ginetti. Accordingly it is believed that all of the new claims are also in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

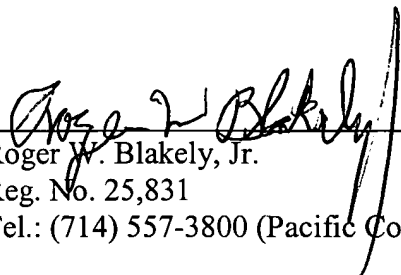
Applicant respectfully requests examination of this case.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Dated: 04/02/2004

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger W. Blakely, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Roger W. Blakely, Jr.

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Attachments

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